



# Studies On Urban Settlement Pattern Of Rastrakuta Period: A Historiographical Review.

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## Abstract

The paper aims to explore the early works on the urban city settlement pattern of the Rastrakuta period in Karnataka. The method of study is mainly historiographical survey and critical review of the selected works of A.S Alktekar, J.F Fleet, and Prof. Nagarajaiiah Hampa. So works chosen for the study are mainly concerning the period of Rastrakuta rule only. These works mainly focus on the urban pattern of early medieval South India. The first part of the study deals with the introductory and basics of settlement patterns so as to understand the concept and settlement. Some other works like Arun Raj T (2009): *'Arikemedu and its Satellite Sites: A Settlement Pattern Study'* are being reviewed. The second part of this paper briefly sketches works on Rastrakuta dynasty. The last part of the paper mainly focuses on the PhD research works carried out on the settlement pattern of urban centers of medieval period i.e., Rastrakuta period in Karnataka. This also includes a critical survey of research papers published in journals. Overall paper summaries study of the city settlement patterns in Karnataka regarding Rastrakuta. This study is mainly based on the historical method, as well as survey method. Further the scope of the study confines to Rastrakuta and the area confined to Karnataka. Both primary and secondary sources are being used to prepare this paper and this also includes a critical survey.

## INTRODUCTION

Urbanization in ancient Karnataka was a gradual development and transition of certain villages into towns and cities. The Mauryas and Satavahanas, who ruled over ancient Karnataka brought political unification for the first time. From then onwards political divisions and provincial headquarters gradually took the shape of a civilized society. The main characteristic features of urban centers were residential

houses, streets, storage of water, protection of the people, and fortification of such an urban center. These urban centers were, either administrative centers, religious centers, agraharas, or centers of trade and commerce. In medieval Karnataka, all these factors might have contributed to the growth of a urban centres, but these enable the gradual process of the development of human settlements which were developed into urban centers. The process of urbanization witnessed direct changes in social, economic, political, and religious conditions. Thus urbanization was a large and continuous process of the development of a village into a city.

From a functional point of view, we can divide the towns of Karnataka into three broad categories Urban Centres, Viz : (i) Urban centres : predominantly administrative towns, (ii) Urban centres : predominantly ritual in character as religious towns and (iii) Urban centres : predominantly mercantile in nature as commercial towns.

According to Gideon Sjoberg, the pre-requisites for the emergence of cities are (i) a favorable ecological base (ii) an advanced technology in both agricultural and non-agricultural spheres (iii) a complex social organization and (iv) a well-developed power structure.

The Rastrakutas (753-982) who ruled over medieval Karnataka established political stability and that helped the socio-economic development of the society. People belonging to all the communities began to reside in such a place, which became the centuries of political power. The complex structure of medieval society contributed to the development of all those towns and centers without interpretation. Another factor that helped the spread of the urban settlements along the coastal line of the Arabian Sea in medieval Karnataka was the system of transportation which helped the growth of international trade. As a result of this important ports like Karwar, Mangalore, Honnavar, Bhatkal, and Malpe emerged during the period from the seventh century to the fourteenth century CE.

### **MEANING AND DEFINITION:**

According to Chang. K.C. ( 1958): "Settlement pattern is the pattern of how human settlements are arranged over the landscape concerning the physiographic and geographic environment."

Vogt. E.E (1956): defined has settlement pattern as the patterned manner in which people's cultural activities and social institutions are described over the landscape. Settlement pattern studies are being used as a working module by scholars to identify different activities of ancient people. Then, Mac.Neish, R.S. (1970): " tried to interpret in light of ecosystems religious tradition were contraction by sears. " Further, Trigger. B.C 1958) has identified three levels as the determinates of settlement pattern. Those are (i) Individual building level (ii) Community level (iii) Zonal level The zonal level pattern is a geographical concept the factors that directly or indirectly influence the settlement pattern of any culture include nearness to perennial water supply, fertility of the soil, the availability of raw material, good grazing grounds, and stable environmental conditions to live on, etc. In complex societies, besides the above-said factors Political organisation, trade, warfare, and religion also play a dominant role. Many works that

corroborate zonal patterns have come up which many scholars' visions. The study of settlement patterns requires strenuous and through fieldwork, mental thinking. Even then it is not fool proof and there exist a few limitations.

## **HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF STUDIES ON SETTLEMENT PATTERN**

Gordon. Willy was the first to introduce settlement pattern studies in archaeology. He was very much impressed by the work of D.C. Steward an Ethnographer by profession who during World War II observed different sites left by nomadic bands of the great basin, by migrating them one place to another place, this was the first step for the formation of the concept of settlement pattern studies in archaeology. Settlement pattern studies aim to obtain ecological, social, and cultural information about ancient societies not from a single site but by studying the remains of the people from a multitude of sites. In other words, settlement pattern is a geographical concept that brings into focus the working relationship between people and their environment, and other technology aspects. According to G.R. Willy (1953), the settlement pattern is a study of how man disposed himself over the landscape on which he lived, it is a strategic point for the functional interpretation of archaeological culture.

**Historical Archaeology** Historical archaeology is a types of archaeology dealing with the places, things, and issues from the past or present of a historical period. Especially when written records and oral tradition can inform and contextualize cultural material. These records can both complement and conflict with the archaeological evidence found at a particular site. These studies focus on the literary-historical period, societies as opposed to non-literate, pre-historic societies. While they may not have generated the records of the lives of people, written records, the lives of people for whom there was a little need for written records such as the working class, slaves, indentured laborers, and children but who lived in historical period can also be the subject of study. The sites are found on land under water. Industrial archaeology unless practiced at industrial sites from the pre-historical area is a form of historical archaeology concentrating on the remains and products of industry and the industrial era.

**Studies on Settlement Patterns in Karnataka :**In the following paragraphs the two kind of writings on Rastrakuta rule are historiographically review viz : at first the earliest works on Rastrakuta rule in general are reviewed and then particularly the works dealing with the Urban Settlement Pattern of Rastrakuta are critically reviewed the same is discussed as follows :

**J.F. Fleet's Contributions to the Study of Karnataka history :** Full of credit for outlining the history of the Rastrakutas in a scholarly way also goes to the Fleet. J.F. Fleet speaks of them as originating from Kanauj but later Dr. Altekar and others argued that the Rastrakutas were of Kannada origin. Though the Fleet could not identify Lattalur in his work, later he succeeded in identifying it Osmanabad district. While connecting them with various other earlier Rastrakuta Branches, his identifying them with the line mentioned in the Maltayi Plates and it has been accepted by later scholars. Fleet agrees with BhauDaji, Buhler, and Bhandarkar that the reference made by Arab travelers like Sulaiman, Abu Zaid, Khurdadba, Al Masudi, Al Istakhri, and IbnHaukal to the line of rulers called Balhora is to the Rastrakutas. Fleet's

identification of Rannadevi, the Rastrakuta prince, who had married Pala Dhruva of Bengal with a daughter of Prabala of another Rastrakuta family from central India.

Fleet identified Govind's III capital Mayurkhandi as Markinda in the Nasik district but fails to identify Shribhuvan, where Amogavarsha was born. Later this has been identified as Sarbhon in Broach district by Dr. Altekar. While speaking of Amogavarsha plates Sudi records holds as a spurious and does not agree with its statement that Chandrabalabbe, Amogavasha's daughter was married to Ganga Butuya. But subsequently, other scholars have shown that a fleet doubting the authenticity of the Sudi records was not right, and Butuya had married the Rastrakuta princess. J.F. Fleet's view that the ascendancy of Jainism during the days of Amoghavarsha was "a sudden development of a marked kind" is surprising, and perhaps he had not observed that Jainism had already struck deep roots in Karnataka and had been patronized by the Kadambas, Gangas, and the Chalukyas. Fleet failed to notice the unique achievement of Indra III who had conquered Kanauj and he assigns him a very short rule of only two years, though he ruled for fifteen years despite these few shortcomings in the account, Fleet's contribution to the historiography of the Rastrakutas is solid and seminal. He has given a considerably dated account. This he could do with the limited sources he had at his disposal.

**Prof. Nagarajaiah, Hampa : "Rastrakutas" : Revisit.** The Rastrakutas supplanted the Chalukyas of Badami, who were virtually the imperial masters of most of the Deccan and stamped its progressively increasing influence. For after their unabated supremacy for over two hundred years in the south.

Marxist historians especially R.S. Sharma, D.D. Kosambi, D.N. Jha, and others believed that the urban centers in early medieval India during 600-1200 CE declined but recent studies show that the emergence of towns and urban development in the records of Rastrakuta. Rastrakutas main urban centers are Malakeda, Harasur (Gulbarga dis), Hallur, Bankur, Jevargi, Harijanvada, Mulagund, Mallasamudra (Gadag dis), Nisidhis, Kesavarolim Gadi-kesvara (Gulb dis), Alandi, Mangalagi (Gulb), Kalasapura (Gadag dis), Kogali, Puligere, Ponnugund/Hunugund (Bagalakot dis), Asundi, Kalagi (Chitapur dis), Marol (Bijapur dis), Bellur (Mandya dis). The literary activities under the Rastrakuta emerged immensely not only Kannada but also Prakrit and another important language. Art centers under Rastrakutas emerged with other economic activities. Architectural activities sprang up everywhere, especially in the region of Gulbarga and shifting towards Bhima to Kagina, this shows building activities under Rastrakuta due to urban characters, that emerged in the twelfth century.

**A S Altekar, (1934) : " Rastrakutas and their Times.":** It is one of the earliest works carried out by A.S. Altekar in 1934. Apart from political history he also discussed economic and cultural development under Rastrakuta. It covers large part of Karnataka. In a chapter like administration, he gave details about the town, government, and their involvement in various activities, during Rastrakuta rule the cities and towns were in charge of Purapatis or Nagarapatis. The city affairs were managed by the Purapatis or Nagarapati with the help of nonofficial committees. The city of Ihole also had its corporation under Krishna II. A town like Mulagund mentioned in the inscription and it had 5 wards. Apart from Deccan, Rastrakuta's

engaged in maritime relations with foreign countries but the inscription of the Rastrakuta period did not give any information about or description of the forts of the period. Only Konnur inscription tells about the fort of Kedala. Other than this we have forts like Morkind and Wari-Dindori in Maharashtra belonging to Govind III. But there is no mention of the navy at all.

In the chapter on Religious conditions, the author mentions about important religious center's belongs to Jainism, Buddhism, Shaivism, Vaishnavism, and temple complexes. Important cities, which were trade centres and centres of exchanges of commodities such as Broach and Kalyan. For inter connection to the cities, roads were constructed but, we have no contemporary records which throw light upon the condition of the roads. Finally, the author mentions about mint house and their towns, overall being a pioneer study of Rastrakuta Altekar give an important thesis that could help us to reconstruct the history and development of urban settlement pattern during Rastrakutas.

## RESEARCH WORKS

*Karnataka Local Self Government in Medieval South India*, by G.S.Dikshit, 1961: The Unpublished thesis, the author on the basis of primary and secondary sources. Moreover thesis discuss about Preveared the Local level administration such as Nadu, Mahanadu, agraharas, and city administrations, but it did not focus on the city urban and settlement pattern.

*Economic Conditions in Karnataka from the end of the tenth century to the beginning of the fourteenth century*, by G.R.Kuppuswami, this work is considered one of the earliest works on the economic history of Karnataka, which discourse on the economic life of Karnataka using primary sources. This is very helpful to reconstruct the economic activities and turn it is very helpful to reconstruct the economic history and the relationship of the town and villages, types of industries, and maritime relationship of Karnataka an important port centers also discussed, then the minor ospects like weight and measurements are also highlighted.

*Urbanization in Ancient Karnataka from early times to CE 1336*, Biradar Suresh. ; This unpublished thesis classified the urban centres as religious, commercial, and administration. Moreover, he discussed the emerging urban centers with their people and the economy of urban life, and urban art and architecture.

*Some Aspects of Economic and Social Life in Karnataka 1000 – 1300 CE*, by S.Gururajachar (1974) thesis discourses the economic factors, which cased to emerg the urban life of Karnataka from the 11th century to 14th century, interestingly some aspects of social life are also discussed here, which helps study urban social life. Finally, it's through the life of art in the urban centres.

*PrachinMattumaddyakalin Karnataka RajadhaninPattanagalu*, by GangadharaDodamani (2007). It is one of the works done on the capital cities of Karnataka. It mainly focus on Banavasi, Badami, Manyaketa, and Kalyana. Finally, the author described inter relation between economic and social life.

## CONCLUSION

The abundant availability of historical sources in Karnataka encouraged the Scholars to undertake studies on these particular aspects. Thus, they engaged in the study of urban city and town from Mauryan to the British period Karnataka had various urban centers which played important role in the economic, political, and cultural life. Recent historiography of the urban economy also focuses on multi-disciplinary and various dimensions of urban studies. So history and historiography of urban settlement in Karnataka are important to construct the economic history as well.

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